

Minutes No. 43/1

Meeting of the National Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB  
and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan

25 December 2020

Dushanbe

Chairperson:

J.Abdullozoda, Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, Deputy Chairman of the National Coordination Committee.

Meeting Participants (19 NCC members):

S.Alizoda, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, Chief Medical Sanitation Officer of the Republic of Tajikistan; N.Mahmadullozoda, Deputy Minister of labor, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan; N.Ibrohimzoda, Deputy Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Tajikistan; R.Safarzoda, Deputy Minister of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan; R.Nasriddinzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan; M.Huseinzoda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan; N.Ghafforzoda, First Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Women's and Youth Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan; A.Mirzozoda, Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Religious Affairs, Streamlining Traditions, Festivities and Rites under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan; D.Ahmadzoda, Deputy Chairman of the Youth Work and Sports Committee under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan; L.Kholov, Department Head, State Committee of National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan; Kh.Aliev, Department Head, TV and Radio Committee under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan; S.Kholov, Health and Education Officer, Unites States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the Republic of Tajikistan; N.Saparova, Officer, HIV Program under the United Nations Development Program in Tajikistan; M.Azizmamadov, Director, NGO "Volonter"; T.Khaidarova, Director, NGO "Tajik Network of Women Living with HIV"; F.Gulova, Director, NGO "Equal Opportunities"; D.Egamberdieva, Director, NGO "Buzurg"; G.Karimova, Director, NGO "Zuhal".

Invited Participants:

1. A.Rajabzoda, Director, Government Agency "National Center for the Protection against TB", Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan.
2. S.Rahmonov, Manager, GF project to Fight TB under the National Center for the Protection against TB.
3. R.Nurov, Director, Government Agency "National Center for the Prevention and Fight against HIV", Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan.

4. M.Odinaeva, Chief specialist, Social Development Department, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan.

5. V.Ismoilov, Chief specialist, Department of Pre-School and General Secondary Education, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan.

6. Z.Avghonov, Executive Secretary, National Coordination Committee.

7. O.Nasibov, Assistant Executive Secretary, National Coordination Committee.

#### Members who did not attend the meeting:

M.Umarov, Deputy Minister of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan, Head of Penal Correction Department, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan; L.Naziri, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan; B.Karrieva, Acting Director, World Health Organization Country Office in Tajikistan; S.Naimov, Director, NGO "Stop TB Partnership" in Tajikistan (for unknown reasons);

#### Meeting agenda:

1. Review implementation progress of the GF Grant to Fight TB for 2018-2020 and the plan for the grant closure.

2. Review implementation progress of the USAID Flagship project to Fight HIV in the Republic of Tajikistan.

3. Review the work plan of the National Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in Tajikistan for 2021.

4. Approve the membership of the Supervisory Commission under the National Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in Tajikistan.

5. Review the work plan of the Supervisory Commission under the National Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in Tajikistan for 2021.

6. Review and approve the Code of Ethical Conduct for Country Coordinating Mechanism Members of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Appoint a member of the National Coordination Committee as a focal-point or organizer of the Ethics Commission composed of no less than 3 persons.

J.Abdullozoda, the Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, Deputy Chairman of the National Coordination Committee, opened the meeting and pointed out that today our country, like the rest of the world, is facing the new COVID-19 infection which has affected the national economy and society in general and has made it imperative that people should change their behavior. Fortunately, with the immediate assistance of the Founder of Peace and National Unity, the National Leader, His Excellency, President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, and due to the efforts of the Government of Tajikistan and concerned ministries and agencies coupled with those of the development partners, the epidemiological situation with this widespread infection was taken under control and stabilized. In particular, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria has

procured anti-infectives and personal protective equipment for TB Centers and AIDS Centers in Tajikistan to strengthen their capacity and facilitate the regular operation of these centers. On behalf of the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan the Minister expressed his gratitude for this charitable contribution.

He then announced the agenda of the meeting and submitted it to the attending NCC members for approval. The agenda of the meeting was unanimously approved by the members of the Committee.

J. Abdullozoda noted that from 2016 to the present, a state structure has been recognized as an executing agency within the framework of a grant supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria on the tuberculosis component as a result of an in-depth assessment of the capacity and in accordance with the established requirements. The second grant implemented by the Project Implementation Unit under the Government Agency "National TB Center" of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan will be finished on December 31, 2020.

After that, to address the first item on the agenda of the meeting "Review implementation progress of the GF Grant to Fight TB and the plan for the grant closure" the floor was given to A.Rajabzoda, the Director of the National TB Center under the Ministry Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan. The speaker noted that, since the beginning of 2016 up to now, the Government Agency "National TB Center" of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan has been the Principal Recipient of the TB Grant provided by the Global Fund. During this period, two phases of TB Grant provided by the Global Fund were implemented by the Project Implementation Unit under the Republican TB Center. Phase one of the Global Fund grant in this area lasted from March 2016 to April 2018, amounting to USD 4.6 million. From April 2018 to the present, the National TB Center has been acting as the Principal Recipient under the Global Fund financed grants to fight TB in accordance with the Grant Agreement, which expired on December 31, 2020 and amounted to USD 11,172,359. He added that since 2016, the National TB Center has provided free testing and treatment to more than 28,550 patients, of which 3,683 persons were diagnosed with MDR-TB.

S.Rahmonov - provided detailed information on the goals and objectives, areas of activity, achievements and challenges in the implementation of the current grant of the Global Fund to Fight TB. In particular, he noted that with the continued support of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and development partners, the TB situation in the country remains under control. In recent years, there has been a decrease in the registration of new cases of TB and mortality from this disease. In 2020, the incidence rate constituted 43.9 per 100 thousand population and the mortality rate from this disease amounted to 2.3 per 100 thousand people. In 2020, 546 persons were diagnosed with TB, of which 498 were covered with treatment.

J.Abdullozoda - What do you think is the reason for the decrease in the number of TB patients?

S.Rahmonov - In my opinion, one of the main reasons is the COVID-19 pandemic. The experience of the Republic of Tajikistan shows that we need to study the reasons for this. It should be noted that the number of tests provided in 2020 and X-ray examinations of suspected TB patients has not decreased compared to last year. I think that other reasons include better compliance with sanitary-hygienic rules by the population, failure to present to the hospital for fear of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the fact that not all migrant workers staying outside of the country managed to return home and consequently could not be covered with the testing.

J.Abdullozoda - What is the percentage of project implementation?

S.Rahmonov - Implementation of all project components, except for the detection of TB patients, is more than 90 percent. The Project's performance is objectively assessed annually by the Global Fund and the Global Fund's Local Agent. In 2018-2019, the project performance received the highest possible rating.

J.Abdullozoda - What new methods of treatment were introduced in the framework of the project, how do they differ from conventional treatment and what is their effectiveness rate?

S.Rahmonov - It should be noted that with the support of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and development partners, the Republic of Tajikistan has made a number of achievements in the field of TB prevention and control. It is now considered to be one of the leading countries in terms of introduction of new diagnostic methods and drugs.

J.Abdullozoda - In some regions of the country, some TB patients are exempt from paying utility bills, whereas in other areas, TB patients are not exempt from such payments. What do you think is the reason?

S.Rahmonov - This is caused by the fact that local self-governance bodies of different cities and districts do not have equal financial capacity.

J.Abdullozoda - What is the reason for the 129% budget overrun with regard to the procurement of TB drugs?

S.Rahmonov - The overspending under this indicator is due to the fact that the Global Fund reduced the duration of the grant by 3 months, and the Project Implementation Unit purchased the amount of anti-TB drugs to ensure that warehouses of TB centers were stockpiled.

J.Abdullozoda, - What is the coverage of the population with the TB detection services?

S.Rahmonov - It should be noted that the solution of this issue requires a joint effort, and I hope that those who did not have the opportunity to seek assistance in TB centers will be able to do so in the first quarter of 2021, which will result in a higher TB detection rate.

J.Abdullozoda – How, do you think, the existing problems should be addressed?

S.Rahmonov - All the existing problems mentioned in the report are taken into account in the draft State Program on the Protection of the Population against TB for 2021-2025, and the necessary measures are provided for their solution in this Program. One of the problems in the sector is that primary health care facilities in 17 cities and districts of the country still do not have separate budgets. At the same time, we consider it expedient to support pensioners working in TB institutions.

J.Abdullozoda - What is being done about provision of TB drugs to TB patients staying in other public health inpatient facilities?

S.Rahmonov - There is a sufficient supply of TB drugs in the Republic of Tajikistan. If TB is detected in patients of other health care facilities, conditions are created for the treatment of the patients in such health care facilities and they receive TB therapy.

A.Rajabzoda added that all TB centers are provided with medicines, and in case of detection of TB cases in other health facilities, TB drugs will be delivered to those health facilities.

J.Abdullozoda – In the description of activities related to the closure of the grant (page 6 of the Plan), it is mentioned that the list of materials (inverter batteries, respirators, medicines, etc.) to be handed over to the Government Agency "National TB Center" and the UN Development Program will be submitted to the National Coordination Committee and the Global Fund in December of current year. Why the lists have not been prepared and annexed to the Plan?

Also, page 13 of the Grant Closing Plan, Chapter 3 provides detailed information on the activities and their financing for the period from January 1 to June 30, 2021, but the budget is not attached to the Plan. In this regard, it was suggested that the Grant Closure Plan be improved based on the provided comments.

Regarding the second item of the agenda "Review implementation progress of the USAID Flagship project to Fight HIV in the Republic of Tajikistan" Education and Health Officer of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in the Republic of Tajikistan, Kholov Saidmumin, informed the meeting participants about the implementation of the USAID Flagship Project to fight HIV in the Republic of Tajikistan. He noted that the said project had started on December 4, 2015 and ended on December 3, 2020. The project was implemented in Dushanbe and cities and districts of republican subordination. During this period, the Project made a number of achievements, including the training of 180 employees of medical institutions and NGOs, and the supply of 77,000 rapid tests in the country. Since September 2019, the self-testing methodology has been implemented by NGOs, and 4,000 tests have been made available to persons willing to do the testing, which resulted in the detection of 70 new cases of HIV infection.

J.Abdullozoda - What are the results of the Flagship Project?

S.Kholov - Significant results of the project include an increase in the detection rate of HIV cases among key populations due to the involvement of NGOs, the introduction of new methods of HIV testing - saliva HIV testing and self-testing, which proved effective during the pandemic of COVID 19.

J.Abdullozoda - What is the accuracy of rapid tests for HIV?

S.Kholov - The accuracy of rapid testing is 94%.

J.Abdullozoda - Has the Project developed and proposed any HIV prevention training program for secondary schools?

S.Kholov - Unfortunately, no such activities were planned under this project.

J.Abdullozoda - You mentioned that one of the tasks of the Project was to identify undetected cases of HIV infection. Please explain this.

S.Kholov - Self-testing was offered to key populations who were not covered by HIV testing.

J.Abdullozoda - What are the indications for HIV testing and what was the result of self-testing?

S.Kholov – On account of existing discrimination against key populations, this method was implemented through public organizations. Overall, 4,000 self-test kits were provided. 82% of those who conducted self-testing reported their results and 2.2% of the results turned out to be HIV positive.

Regarding the third issue of the meeting "Review of the Work Plan of the National Coordination Committee to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021" Executive Secretary of the National Coordination Committee Avghonov Z. noted that in accordance with paragraph 16 of the Regulations of the National Coordination Committee, the Secretariat of the National Coordination Committee had developed a draft Work Plan of the National Coordination Committee for 2021. The draft Plan consists of two parts: 1) The issues to be discussed at the meetings of the National Coordination Committee, and 2) The main areas of activity to address the current tasks of the National Coordination Committee. He asked the members of the National Coordination Committee to consider and approve the draft Work Plan of the National Coordination Committee for 2021.

On the fourth issue of the agenda "Approval of the composition of the Oversight Commission under the National Coordination Committee to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan" Assistant Executive Secretary of the National Coordination Committee Nasibov O. pointed out that the composition of the Oversight Commission was approved by the decision of the National Coordination Committee dated November 13, 2018, No. 6 / 25-74, and by the decisions of the National Coordination Committee dated May 16, 2019, №6 / 25-43 and November 14, 2019, No. 6 / 25-86, the composition of the Oversight Commission was changed. Five out of eight members of the Oversight Commission are no longer working in their previous positions: M.Kamolzoda, - Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, Chairman of the Oversight Commission; U.Latifi - Head of the Department of International Relations of the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan; S.Abdujaborov Head of the Social Sector Budget Department of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan; F.Habibov - Head of the Social Development Department of the Ministry

of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan and Bridget Job-Johnson - Head of the Health and Nutrition Section of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Tajikistan. He added that in accordance with Article 6 of the Regulations of the National Coordination Committee, the National Coordination Committee has the right to appoint commissions and working groups from among the members of the National Coordination Committee, employees of government agencies and representatives of organizations not included in the National Coordination Committee. The management of commissions and working groups should be entrusted to one of the members of the National Coordination Committee. He asked the members of the National Coordination Committee to nominate and approve the new composition of the Supervisory Commission.

The following persons were nominated by the members of the National Coordination Committee to the Oversight Commission:

1) S.Alizoda, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, Chief Medical Sanitation Officer of the Republic of Tajikistan, Head of the Oversight Commission;

Members of the Commission:

2) R.Safarzoda, Deputy Minister of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan,

3) O.Saidov, Chief specialist, Social Development Department, Executive office of the President of Tajikistan;

4) M.Odinaeva, Chief Specialist, Social Development Department, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan;

5) N.Saidova, Director, NGO "Gender and Development";

6) Kathrine Owens, Head of Health and Education Unit, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the Republic of Tajikistan.

Regarding the fifth item on the agenda of the meeting "Review of the work plan of the Oversight Commission under the National Coordination Committee to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021" Assistant Executive Secretary of the National Coordination Committee Nasibov O. noted that on the basis of paragraph 6 of Annex 1 "Oversight Plan", approved by the National Coordination Committee on July 10, 2012, №21, the Secretariat of the National Coordination Committee developed a draft Work Plan of the Oversight Commission for 2021. He asked the members of the National Coordination Committee to consider and approve the draft Work Plan of the Oversight Commission for 2021.

With regard to the last item on the agenda «The approval of the Code of Ethical Conduct for Country Coordinating Mechanism Members of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, as well as the appointment of a member of the National Coordination Committee as a focal point or the establishment of a Committee on Ethics consisting of at least three members) Executive Secretary of the National Coordination Committee to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan, Z.Avghonov, noted that the Global Fund has set 6 eligibility requirements for national coordination committees, which define the right of national coordination committees to receive funding. Consistent compliance with all Eligibility Requirements throughout the program implementation period is a prerequisite for receiving grants from the Global Fund. One of these requirements is the adoption by

the country's coordination committee of a Code of Ethical Conduct for Country Coordinating Mechanism Members. He asked the members of the National Coordination Committee to adopt the "Code of Ethical Conduct for Country Coordinating Mechanism Members " approved by the Global Fund.

He also noted that, in accordance with the requirements of the Global Fund, the National Coordination Committee should elect a member of the National Coordination Committee as the focal-point for Ethics or establish an Ethics Committee. He asked the members of the National Coordination Committee to consider this issue.

Having reviewed the issues of the agenda, the National Coordination Committee resolved:

1. To take note of the report of the Government Agency "National TB Center" under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the implementation of the Global Fund grant to combat TB."

1.1. To approve the Plan for Closing of the TB grant for 2018-2020, taking into account the above proposals.

2. To take note of the Report of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the Republic of Tajikistan "On the progress made by the USAID Flagship Project in the fight against HIV in Tajikistan".

3. To approve the work plan of National Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021 (Annex 1).

4. To approve the composition of the Oversight Commission under the National Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan (Annex 2):

5. To approve the Work plan of the Oversight Commission under the National Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021 (Annex 3).

6. To adopt the Global Fund's Code of Ethical Conduct for Country Coordinating Mechanism Members (Annex 4).

To appoint F.Gulova, Director of NGO "Equal Opportunities" to act as the focal point on issues pertaining to ethics/

J.Abdullozoda  
Minister of Health and Social Protection  
of the Republic of Tajikistan,  
Deputy Chairman of the National  
Coordination Committee



**Annex 1**  
Approved  
at the Meeting of the National Coordination  
Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and  
Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan  
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Workplan  
of the National Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria  
in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021

№	Activities	Responsible Agencies	Implementation Timeframe
<b>I. Issues to be discussed in meetings of the National Coordinating Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan</b>			
1	On the progress of the USAID funded ETICA project in Tajikistan implemented by Abt Associates in Tajikistan	Abt Associates office in Tajikistan	First half of the year
2	On the activities of the ICAP Office in the Republic of Tajikistan	ICAP Office in the Republic of Tajikistan	First half of the year
3	On the implementation progress of the Global Fund grant to fight HIV and TB in the Republic of Tajikistan.	United Nations Development Program in Tajikistan	Second half of the year
4	On the implementation progress of the National Program to combat TB in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025	Government Agency "National TB Center" under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan	Second half of the year

5	On the implementation progress of the National Program to Combat the HIV Epidemic in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2025	Government Agency "National AIDS Prevention and Control Center" under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan	Second half of the year
6	On the Work Plan of the National Coordinating Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria in the Republic of Tajikistan	NCC Secretariat	Second half of the year
7	On the work plan of the NCC Supervisory Commission for 2022	Supervisory Commission, NCC Secretariat	Second half of the year

## II. Core activities

1	Organization and holding of NCC meetings	NCC Secretariat	In accordance with the CCM Regulations
2	Provision of induction training for new members of the National Coordination Committee	NCC Secretariat	First half of the year
3	Conducting a coordination meeting with members of the Coordination Council for the prevention and control of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region	NCC Secretariat	First quarter
4	Conducting a coordination meeting with members of the Coordination Council for the prevention and control of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in Sughd region	NCC Secretariat	Second quarter
5	Conducting a coordination meeting with members of the Coordination Council for the prevention and control of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in Khatlon region	NCC Secretariat	Third quarter

6	Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of and access to health services supported under the Global Fund grants to combat TB and HIV in Kulob area of Khatlon Region	NCC Secretariat	First quarter
7	Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of and access to health services supported under the Global Fund grants to combat TB and HIV in Bohtar area of Khatlon Region	NCC Secretariat	Second quarter
8	Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of and access to health services supported under the Global Fund grants to combat TB and HIV in GBAO	NCC Secretariat	Third quarter
9	Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of and access to health services supported under the Global Fund grants to combat TB and HIV in Sughd Region	NCC Secretariat	Forth quarter
10	Posting of information on the NCC website and dissemination of NCC materials to government, non-governmental and international organizations and through the media	NCC Secretariat	On an ongoing basis
11	Organization of events on the occasion of: -World Tuberculosis Day; -World Malaria Day; -World AIDS Day	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan	March 24 Third Sunday in May December 1

NCC Executive Secretary

Z.Avghonov

**Annex 2**  
Approved  
at the Meeting of the National Coordination  
Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria  
in the Republic of Tajikistan  
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Composition  
of the Oversight Commission under the National  
Coordination Committee to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria  
in the Republic of Tajikistan

1. S.Alizoda, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, Chief Medical Sanitation Officer of the Republic of Tajikistan, Head of the Oversight Commission;

Members of the Commission:

2. R.Safarzoda, Deputy Minister of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan,
3. O.Saidov, Chief specialist, Social Development Department, Executive office of the President of Tajikistan;
4. M.Odinaeva, Chief Specialist, Social Development Department, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan;
5. N.Saidova, Director, NGO "Gender and Development";
6. Kathrine Owens, Head of Health and Education Unit, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the Republic of Tajikistan.

NCC Executive Secretary

Z.Avghonov